

Big Bend

Ranger Programs

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park
Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River



January 03 - 09, 2016

Sunday, January 3

9:30 AM Guided Walk – “Desert Trivia” What defines a desert? Considered desolate, uninhabitable lands by some, deserts can be places of spectacular diversity and stark beauty. Join Ranger M. Lavender and learn about the deserts of the US, and what makes the Chihuahuan Desert of Big Bend so special. Meet at Dugout Wells, 6 miles southeast of Panther Junction. Bring water, a hat, and good walking shoes. ½ mile. 1 hour.

7:30 PM Evening Program – “Rattlesnake Country” With their sharp fangs and venomous bite, rattlesnakes are often feared by humans. Join Ranger C. Rinas to test your knowledge of these reptiles and learn how to safely enjoy the outdoors now that you're in rattlesnake country. Meet at the Chisos Basin Amphitheater. Wheelchair accessible. Bring a flashlight. 1 hour.

Monday, January 4

3:00 PM Guided Walk – “Islands in the Sky” It is hard to stand in the Chisos Basin and not have a heightened sense of one's surroundings. The forested environment supports a variety of plants and animals not found elsewhere in the park. Join Ranger B. Frohbieter for a discussion of the “sky island” ecology of the Chisos Mountains. Meet at the Chisos Basin Trailhead. Wheelchair accessible. 1/3 mile. 45 minutes.

7:30 PM Evening Program – “Big Cats in Big Bend” Solitary and elusive, mountain lions have incited mystery, myth, and the imagination. Although often feared by people, these cats play an important role in the health of Big Bend's ecology. Join Ranger J. Woerner to learn about these powerfully misunderstood creatures and what makes them so special. Meet at the Chisos Basin Amphitheater. Bring a flashlight. Wheelchair accessible. 1 hour.

Tuesday, January 5

3:00 PM Guided Walk – “The Birth of the CCC” There was a cry that came from our country in the 1930s, a cry of hunger, poverty, and lack of work. Franklin D. Roosevelt heard this cry and strove to do something about it, creating the Civilian Conservation Corp. Join Ranger K. Eckert to learn more about the creation of the CCC and see their lasting handiwork here in Big Bend National Park. Meet at the Chisos Basin Trailhead. 1/3 mile walk. Wheelchair accessible. 45 minutes.

Wednesday, January 6

3:00 PM Guided Walk – “Soap from Yucca & More!” If you have the knowledge, just about everything you need can be obtained from plants. Join Ranger C. Rinas on this easy 0.5 mile walk to learn about some of the traditional uses of plants. Bring water and sun protection. Meet at the Dugout Wells picnic area. 1/3 mile walk. 45 minutes.

Thursday, January 7

3:00 PM Guided Walk – “Hot Springs, a History” From prehistoric camp to healing resort, the hot springs on the Rio Grande have been a focal point for communities throughout history. The art and homes they leave behind reveal these stories. Join Ranger J. Woerner to learn more about the history of the Hot Springs. Meet at the Hot Springs store (50 yards from the parking lot). Bring water, a hat, and good walking shoes. 1 mile. 1 hour.

7:30 PM Evening Program – “Star-gazing with Binoculars and the Naked Eye” You don't need a telescope to locate and enjoy many of the natural wonders in the night skies over Big Bend National Park. Join Volunteer R. Wonite for a laser-guided tour of the more prominent stars, star clusters, and nebulae in the winter sky (weather permitting). Meet at the pullout at Mile 15.3 on the road to Rio Grande Village. Wheelchair accessible. Bring binoculars and/or a chair if you have them. 1 hour.

Friday, January 8

7:30 PM Evening Program – “Some Endangered Evening” Is it dark where you live? Can you see as many stars as you once could? A dark night sky is an important factor in the lives of living creatures planet-wide, a way for humans to connect to days past, when artificial light was non-existent. Join Ranger B. Smith for an evening about evenings. A telescope will be set up to view a celestial object. Meet at the Rio Grande Village Amphitheater. Bring a flashlight. Wheelchair accessible. 1 hour.

Saturday, January 9

9:30 AM Program – “Scorpions” How is a scorpion like an alligator? What do they have in common with seals? Join Ranger K. Eckert to learn more about scorpions, common misconceptions, and the unusual similarities they have to other species. Meet on the patio outside the Chisos Mountains Lodge. Wheelchair accessible. 45 minutes.

7:30 PM Evening Program – “Jet Fighters & Hang Gliders: The World of Big Bend's Raptors” Big Bend is home to a rich diversity of birds, including raptors. Join Ranger M. Lavender for a visual program to learn more about this unique type of bird, how to identify them in the wild, and what makes them so inspirational. Meet at the Chisos Basin Amphitheater. Wheelchair accessible. Bring a flashlight. 1 hour.

Not able to attend a program? Consider these alternatives:

The 22-mile-long Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive offers access to eight different trails, several scenic vistas, many paved pullouts with exhibits that highlight park geology and cultural history, and culminates at the Castolon Historic District. Take a day and go explore!

Enjoy the breath-taking beauty of Big Bend National Park in comfort with our 22-minute Park Orientation film. Available daily on request at the Panther Junction Visitor Center.

Explore beyond the park and learn more about Big Bend history. The Terlingua Ghost Town offers several restaurants and stores, as well as a self-guiding tour of the old quicksilver mining district and historic cemetery.